

Composition I

ENGL 1013

Essay Assignment 3: Critique (Rhetorical Analysis)

For your third paper assignment, write a critique of [text's title] by [author's name] from *They Say/I Say*.

In the two previous writing assignments, you engaged in summarizing and synthesizing. Those two skills, respectively, allow you to report the ideas of others concisely and to relate the information found in several sources to one another. In critiquing a source, you evaluate the validity of an author's ideas and the overall persuasiveness of the author's argument. Use your summarizing skills to paraphrase the central ideas found in your source text, and clearly express your reasons for responding as you do to the author's argument. To write an effective critique, consider following the guidelines found on pages 68-69 in the textbook *A Sequence for Academic Writing (ASAW)*.

Introduction

Identify the text you're critiquing, its author, and the central issue it addresses. State your evaluation of the article, and announce the various points you will be addressing in the rest of the essay. This type of introduction will tell the reader what article you're discussing (the topic), what your critique of the article is (your thesis), and what aspects of the article you will discuss to support that critique (your "essay map").

Body

The body of your critique should consist of an *assessment component* and a *response component*.

The *assessment component* helps you identify the various rhetorical features of the essay by considering them as strategies to convince you to accept an argument. In addition to the questions listed on page 68 of *ASAW*, consider these:

- Has the author presented dissenting opinions fairly?
- Has the author used emotionally-loaded terms?
- Does the author use logical fallacies (see pages 175-177 of *The St. Martin's Handbook*)?
- What do the tone, diction, and evidence of the text tell us about its presumed audience?

Choose three or four rhetorical elements to discuss. Consider whether the author succeeds or fails – entirely or partially – in regard to these elements, and explain why that is. Plan on devoting at least a paragraph to each one.

The *response component* leads you to express your agreement or disagreement with Peacocke's or Pollan's *overarching argument* as a result of considering the various features of the text. Has the author persuaded you, or at least given you something to think about? What are your reasons for agreeing/disagreeing with the author? Can you give the author credit for the argumentative approach employed in the article even if you disagree with the opinion expressed in it?

Remember that your critique should be coherent, so you do not necessarily have to treat the assessment component and response component as separate sections in the body of your essay. You may also enhance your essay's coherence by clearly identifying your topic of discussion, sequencing your topics of discussion in a logical order, and using transitional phrases and sentences to connect your ideas – especially as you move from one paragraph to another.

Conclusion

Consider that you promised your readers something in your essay's introduction. Did you accomplish the task? Indicate to your reader that your essay has accomplished what it set out to do by stating your overall reaction to the validity of the article based on the rhetorical features you considered. Use this opportunity to leave your reader with a lasting thought about the significance of your observations.

Citation Style

Use MLA style to attribute information and expression of ideas to your source. Every time you quote or paraphrase from the sources provide the corresponding parenthetical citation. In a separate "Works Cited" page, provide the full bibliographic entry for the text you critiqued.